

# THE MESSENGER



## OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA

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J. DAVIS

# CONGREGATION OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA (White Sisters)

**ORIGIN AND AIM:** The Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa was founded in 1869 by Cardinal Lavigerie, to rescue, moralize and regenerate the pagan and Mohammedan woman, and through her attain the family and society. Exclusively vowed to the Apostolate in Africa, the Sisters devote their lives to the natives in every work of mercy and charity . . . Catechetical, Medical, Educational.

**GOVERNMENT AND APPROBATION:** The Congregation is governed by a Superior General who depends directly on the Holy See. The Constitutions were definitely approved by decree the 14th of December 1909 and promulgated on the 3rd of January 1910.

**SPIRIT:** The Spirit of the Congregation is one of obedience, humility, simplicity, and zeal; and the life of the Sisters one of poverty, mortification and labor.

\* \* \* \*

The Congregation numbers over 1,500 Professed Sisters who are devoting their lives to the Natives in 120 Missions, that spread out through—

North Africa: Algeria, Tunisia, Atlas Mountains, Sahara.

West Africa: The Gold Coast, French West Africa.

East Africa: Kenya, Nyassaland, Tanganyika, Uganda, Rhodesia, Belgian Congo, Rwanda, Urundi.

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**OUR AMERICAN HOME IS AT:**

White Sisters Convent  
319 Middlesex Avenue  
Metuchen, New Jersey

## THE MESSENGER OF

## OUR LADY OF AFRICA

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### SPIRITUAL ADVANTAGES

Three Masses are said monthly for the living and deceased benefactors of the Congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. Moreover, they share in the prayers and apostolic labors of over fifteen hundred White Sisters, who are working in the African Missions; and in the prayers and acts of self denial that the Natives, so willingly, offer up daily for their benefactors.

### TO AVOID THE MISSIONS UNNECESSARY EXPENSE,

kindly notify us immediately of a change of address. If you do not, the postal authorities will tax us for their notification.

### CONTENTS

	Page
THE NEGRO PRIESTHOOD .....	1
ABOUT OUR BOYS .....	2
MARY—AND THE INFANTS— .....	3
HOW THE DAYS PASSED .....	4
I WANT TO BE A PRIEST .....	7
IN THE MAIL BAG .....	8



## The Negro Priesthood

*Hail, Africa, thy day has dawned!*

*Behold the sunrise of a race!*

*A call to song—a call to joy!*

*And Peter Claver smiles to see*

*The Negro Priesthood—strong and free!*

*No higher state than this could be—*

*Oh, sons of Africa!*

*By Lucie Lamperto*



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*A Holy, Happy New Year*

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## About Our Boys

**O**UR SISTERS have related to us many edifying traits regarding our dear fellow-countrymen who passed through North Africa, sojourning here for more or less extended periods of time. They will surely interest you.

★ V . . . — ★

At the time of the first landing of our Boys at Algiers, there were but few American Chaplains. And so one of our Mother-House Chaplains was able to welcome our little soldiers coming to him daily, asking to have their confessions heard. These poor youngsters athirst for the Sacraments, would tell one another the good news, that they had discovered an English speaking Priest. The two evenings preceding Christmas Day, the army trucks succeeded one another almost without interruption, bringing the soldiers who wish to prepare themselves in order to celebrate the birthday of Our Savior with all possible piety and devotion. The day after Christmas, four aviators arrived here, three of whom had been here before Christmas and were bringing the fourth, "who" they stated, "was unable to go to confession at the same time as us, so he comes now."

★ V . . . — ★

For Christmas, our good soldiers were very generous towards the Missions, and showered Sisters and children with "goodies." But what most touched our hearts were the two crates containing "the sacrifices made by the soldiers for our orphans." In them were all sorts of things, offered to the Infant King with a child's simplicity. Some of the boys had even deprived themselves of half of their sugar ration.

★ V . . . — ★

What veneration these dear Boys have for their Mothers! They would come to us to speak of them and show us their photos, how many beloved mothers have thus filed before our eyes.

One day, we took pleasure in passing the remark before them how well Catholic Americans practiced their religion. "Oh!" one of them exclaimed, "It is our mothers who have taught us to pray. Mother would surely be heartbroken, if she learned that away from her, I was no longer faithful to all my religious duties. You may pray for us, that we may never cause such sorrow to our Mothers."

Another time towards the end of the afternoon, seven soldiers came here at the Mother-House to procure African souvenirs which they desired to send to their families. Their army cars were already aboard ship, as they were on the point of leaving Algeria, and they had come all the way on foot. Due to the intense torrid heat of the day, we offered them a refreshment, wine from the vineyards of St. Charles. Six of them gratefully accepted, while the seventh very gently declined. "Perhaps wine does not agree with you?" asked a Sister. "It is not that," replied the young soldier, "but I promised Mother that I would not drink." Happy Mother! Although thousands of miles separate them, if she could know with what fidelity her son keeps his promises!

★ V . . . — ★

How many of them also come asking for rosaries and medals, offering in return a generous alms. One of them explained: "Before leaving, my fiancée had given me a scapular medal. I have lost it and simply cannot remain without a medal. Could you not give me one?"

★ V . . . — ★

In a parish nearby, the American Soldiers pleaded with the Reverend Pastor asking him to say his Mass at an earlier hour so that they could attend. The good Father replied that it was quite impossible, as blackouts were strictly in force, and that his church was very hard to disguise. "If it is only that," replied our valiant soldiers, "we will come and disguise your church." The very same evening, they were actively on the job, making short work of camouflaging the Church; and too, the very next day, they were able to have their early morning Mass, to which they have since assisted in large numbers and in a very recollected attitude. Fifteen of them are daily communicants, and every afternoon, two of them return to very piously make a long "Way of the Cross."

★ V . . . — ★

In Tunisia, an American Chaplain came one day shortly after dinner, asking a lady, one of our friends whose property is close to the Air Base if she would kindly let him have a room where he

(Concluded on opposite page)



Dear Jesus bless and protect the soldiers who have given so generously in Your Name.

# MARY — AND THE INFANTS

A LITTLE BLACK BABE is very cute when he opens his big brown eyes to smile at the angels. Its childish babble fills his mother's heart with joy. Why then is this young woman crying as she gently rocks her little black baby? Alas, for three days he has not opened his eyes for a terrible disease has extinguished his smile. Confident in the remedies of the Sisters, she has brought him to the dispensary. They washed out his eyes all the while urging the mother to bring him back every day. The medicine they placed in each eye must have burned very much for the baby screamed loud enough to pierce any Mother's heart.

She undoubtedly was tempted never to return to hear those piercing cries again, nevertheless, courageously and confidently, she did return the next day and the next. On the third day, looking at the poor eyes, the Sister frowned as if to say, "Not so good," and hesitated in her choice of medicine. The mother was quick to interpret these gestures and, seeing her baby as already blind, the tears began to fall. Quickly she picked up her treasure and ran, not to the village, but to the feet

of Our Lady of Mercy. Lifting her little black cherub in her arms, she offered him to the Blessed Virgin.

"I give him to you. He can't open his eyes, the medicine of the sisters did not work, now it is up to you."

The Virgin, hearing the simple and confident prayer, opened the eyes of the little black babe.

The young mother, not at all astonished by this miracle, very simply thanked her, bowed, then left to hide her joy in her hut. Often since that day her heart is lifted up in a prayer of thanksgiving.

The women of Kassonke love to pray before the beautiful statue. In Mary they see especially the Mother of Jesus and the sight of Mary with the Divine Infant in her arms fills them with joy. This devotion has a special attraction for them.

Mary loves the mothers and their pretty little darlings but her predilection sometimes shows itself in another way.

Boundjou is proud of her lively baby, and rightly so, but she is not egotistical. This morning on her knees in the chapel, she took her babe, as Abel of old took the whitest of his sheep, and raised him up under the eyes of the Immaculate Virgin as a victim without blemish.

"Holy Mary, this is my child, he is yours too, I give him to you. When he is big he will come himself to pray, but now, he is too little to know so I have brought him and I pray for him."

The offering came from the heart and Mary accepted it.

Soon the strength of the baby began to fade and all the care given him was useless. Boundjou asked that her son be baptised, Baptism being the best of all remedies. Little Vital soon departed to heaven to sing forever the praises of Mary and her Son.

Boundjou did not cry. "I know he is happy in heaven," she said to the sister who came to console her, "and he would not want me to be sad. I too want to receive Baptism. You know how much I love your religion and how much I love the Blessed Virgin. Every night and morning I pray to her."

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## ABOUT OUR BOYS

[ Concluded ]

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could hear Confessions. "Most willingly," she replied, showing him a little room, and stating: "you could have the large dining room as a waiting place." The offer was gratefully accepted, and soon the large hall was filled with soldiers. Towards the end of the afternoon, the lady having forgotten the incident, came unexpectedly through the dining room. Two soldiers were still there, piously kneeling before the Crucifix waiting for their turn, not even turning their heads at the noise as the door was opened.

★ V . . . — ★

A recent letter, from Mother Jeanne-Frances, said how the American Chaplains, from two nearby air bases in Tunisia, were preparing a Christmas Tree for all the children of the region, and she adds "which causes us great joy in these days of extreme want." This was for Christmas 1944, may God bless and reward the generous charity of Chaplains and Soldiers.

—Sister M. Irena





**Thursday, June 15th:** 2 o'clock, life saving drill on deck.

**4 o'clock:** It is still drizzling and the sky is gray. Something looms up on the horizon. It proves to be a convoy of eight ships. One comes quite close, the boats are all gray and the tenseness of caution creeps all around us as each approaches the other. We thank God that we sail under the neutral flag of Portugal. Unlike others, our boat, though not flashy, has some color and there are no dim-outs at night. The boat is well lighted all night, with strong beacon lights illuminating the Portuguese colors painted on an upright wooden board, the size of a huge flag. We go along smoothly without any camouflage openly available to the gaze of all who pass by. "It is war time" the thought flashes through my mind quite often and a silent prayer rises to Heaven in favor of all the distressed families the world over. Here we are in the hands of a seemingly capable pilot and an efficient crew . . . and what confidence we have in the Master above.




**SISTER M. IRENA**, author of this travelog, hails from Worcester, Mass. After a stop over at the Motherhouse, Algiers; she is now stationed at our Hospital of Akbou (Constantine), Algeria.

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# How The Days

**Friday, June 16th:** Feast of the Sacred Heart - on deck the little Missionaries make a serious attempt to sing the Mass of the Sacred Heart, thinking longingly of the gala festivities in our Convents.

Saturday, June 17th, early afternoon.

Out of nowhere comes a plane twice over the ship. Sr. Mary of Protection, on deck, recites her act of contrition at the first circling. When the plane returns a second time, she rushes in upon Mother who is writing in the salon, "Mother," says she very impressively, "I come to die with you." Quite an imagination for a young Sister! . . . All are reassured to see the American insignia, white star on square background. War time makes ordinary events fantastic and plays on our impressions.

Another life-saving drill. The wind tosses a little boy's balloon into the sea. No one however offers to rescue the toy and on the tot's face is a pitiful look of disappointment. After dinner the orchestra on deck peals forth, it is "ball time". It has no charm for us, and we are glad to retire early each evening.

**Sunday, June 18th.** Beautiful day, promises to be warm. On deck, strains of hymns fleet over to us. The Congregation has assembled in the salon for services. Everyone is invited and the decks are quite deserted. Not to be outdone, we gather for a rehearsal and Mother posts a notice on the bulletin board that at 10:30 there will be prayers and hymns of the Holy Mass in the little chapel. How we long for one of our Sunday High Mass but the little missionaries make up for it by the lovely Gregorian chant of the Gloria, Credo and Sanctus and also the Ave Maris Stella, Salve Regina, Cor Jesu. Mother reads the Sunday Gospel and I am convinced that Our Lord must smile upon our efforts. Three lady passengers join us. Very few Catholics on board. On the little altar, two electric candles burn night and day. We are eleven strong to-day, and it is delightful to have no one missing in our family group.

**3 o'clock.** As per previous notice given, a whistle blows and the motors are shut

# ys Passed

(continued from November-December)

★ Sister M. IRENA, W. S.

off, all passengers observing quiet for two minutes, in silent memory of those who lost their lives at this spot when a German submarine accosted the boat and ordered the ship abandoned. Tears roll down the Captain's face. We silently pray for the repose of the departed ones.

Here is the story told by the chief Steward: On the ship's last trip from Lisbon to Philadelphia, just several weeks ago, an enemy submarine accosted the boat and ordered all passengers into life-boats within twenty minutes. They then telegraphed Berlin and were told to let the ship go by as it was from a neutral country. The passengers were four hours into life-boats and during the maneuvering, three people were drowned, namely the ship doctor, the cook and a 16-months old baby passenger disappeared. Seems the poor Captain was terribly grief-stricken. Two passengers reported Americans, but holding Portuguese passports, were taken away into the submarine.

There are many children on board, of all ages, and we can hear them frolicking around most of the day. They are full of life and sea-sickness never seems to touch them. I marvel at their energy. Being of Missionary stock, they are used to travel. They have their meals in a little dining-room of their own, an hour before the grownups. We take advantage of the quiet hour before dinner to gather in a cool corner and do the Reading and the Visit together. It is the first time we find ourselves able to do this. It's quite delightful for a Sunday afternoon. Strains of Chopin and Beethoven drift gently towards us. The sea is very calm and the breeze warm. All afternoon we are intrigued by the tiny white fishes who shoot out of the water every once in a while, carelessly span two or three waves, then disappear into the sea. They are hardly perceptible with the sunlight flashing upon them. Dinner not being until 7, we have time for a good promenade and we disperse in groups of two or three. The sea is like a mirror, at its Sunday best, the shadows are gathering, two stars peeping out very faintly just over the mast where the green and red Portuguese flag waves in the breeze. Even the crew seems to be relaxing on the lower deck. In this

quiet peace, our thoughts turn naturally to God, the King and Master of all this vastness. One feels very small in contemplating this deep immensity; how silent and mysterious the sea, yet so eloquent to the Omnipotence of God and our nothingness. It speaks of the Infinite and makes us realize how powerless is humanity without the Hand of God to sustain it. It tells us also of the merciful love of Our Heavenly Father in being mindful of His poor creatures.

**Monday, June 19th.** The time being advanced an hour in the night, most of us awake later than usual. There is a stiff breeze blowing, and it is damp and sticky. The sun shines, however . . . it will be a nice day. How good is the Lord in giving us such fine weather. We sight a school of porpoises. How interesting to watch them, their shining black heads darting out of the water, then plunging back again into the sea, leaving behind them a trail of white caps. They seem to lead a happy, care-free life.

**10 o'clock.** Sr. Jean de la Passion, my companion on deck, points to something floating in the distance. Looks like a large box. We watch it a while and are suddenly aware that the ship is making a complete turn back. It circles right around and comes up alongside the crate within several yards of it. Cautiously passing by, it repeats the same procedure, making a wide circle back and bringing up again close to it. The passengers rush to the rail looking on quite fascinatingly. We see the thing at very close range. It is a large-sized bomb neatly laid in a long close-fitting triangular wooden cage. How and why? . . . we wonder. Anyhow we continue on our way, leaving the thing behind, safely untouched. A silent prayer rises to God

We are told two ships passed us in the night, I recall Mom and Dad's wedding anniversary today, and lovingly recommend them to Jesus.

**Tuesday, June 20th:** Another fine day . . . Praised be the Lord. The trip across now is half over unless we stop at the islands. We are all feeling fine, and Sr. Joseph says it is worthwhile being sick

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## HOW THE DAYS PASSED

[ Continued ]

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when one feels so well afterwards. Our whole days are spent on deck, the sea air should be most beneficial. Seems like a month that we left Metuchen instead of just a week. We travel in a straight line from Philadelphia to Lisbon. I turn my chair face to the wall and take a siesta on deck, taking advantage of the invigorating breeze.

**4:30:** Visions of little Cecile and Raymond spring up before me, and together with Sr. Joseph, who is beside me on deck, I break out into a good laugh. You'll want to know why? The orchestra on the other side of the deck, has just burst forth into "Maizie" and I have a charming picture of darling Raymond with his large brown eyes on Cecile, imitating her every gesture, singing for all he's worth, and "la belle Cecile," her little mouth wide open, both rendering a pretty duet as they sing out very clearly: "Mares eat oats and does eat oats and little lams eat ivy" . . . showing tiny white teeth. Makes me realize how far away I am from you all. Never mind, one day not far off, we shall all be together again on the eternal shore. In the meantime . . . all one in Christ. Every afternoon after tea, there is a concert on deck, and all the passengers keep

to that side of the deck, leaving the other side deserted except for us. Imagine our delight. Storm clouds are gathered and I have not yet seen a real sunset here on the sea. I don't think any can compare with one on the Mexican Gulf. Everybody now looks bright and happy and our recreations are very gay—good preventive against sea-sickness and home-sickness. We lose another hour this night. Sr. Mary says there is nothing striking about today except the striking likeness with yesterday.

**Wednesday, June 21st:** We must be nearing the Islands or something. There is sea-weed a-plenty floating around us and I see a stray bird flying. Our 8th day out. It is very warm although the night gave us a cooling breeze and we slept like tops. This afternoon, I indulge in a two hour siesta as tonight another hour is to be snatched from us. We are now three hours ahead of you. Sr. Michael and I take a look at the bulletin board and an officer stops to chat with us in French. We marvel at the good sea we have had so far, and he smilingly remarks: "there are still four days you know." Seems two ships passed us last night. One was all dark and low and caused quite an alarm among the passengers who had not yet retired. Unaware of it all, we holy innocents slept on undisturbed.

(To be continued)

41,949 visits

to the Sick

in their homes

are reported

in the Sisters'

yearly statistics.





# I Want to Be a Priest

JACOBO is a little Blackie, only ten years old with bright intelligent eyes, always up to some prank and the bravest and the most daring of the whole band,—yet today he is actually afraid. Why? Because a great day is approaching, the day of the School-Leaving Examination in the Elementary Vernacular, and he has sometimes, nay often, played during class, so he is weak in more than one subject.

All these thoughts crowd in on the little man and another besides, a secret one,—not for anybody's ears, but you may know. It is this: "I must pass my examination, because I want to be a Priest."

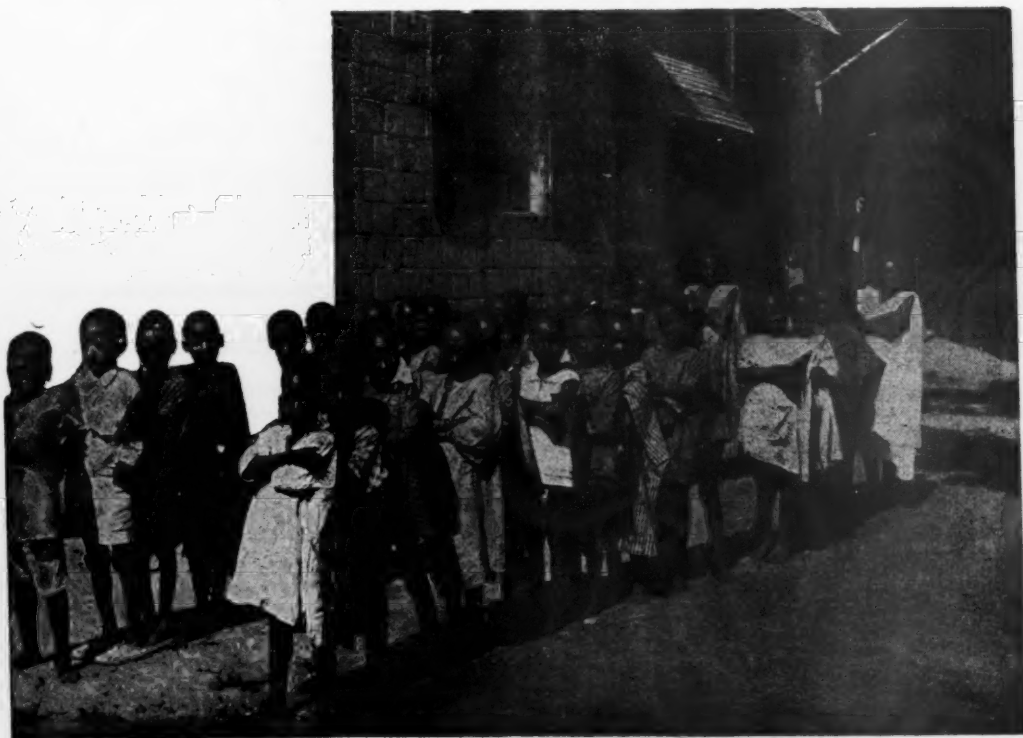
Yes, this little fellow wants to be a priest. Though naughty at times, he is not really very bad, in fact he is often very good. I have watched him go the round "begging," begging for prayers.

The White Fathers, the White Sisters, his playmates, all are asked to promise their help, while Jacobo himself storms Heaven.

Did he pass his exam? Yes, he did. He was then ready for Middle School after the holidays, but alas, he was not admitted because he could not supply the fees.

Jacobo's motto being: "Never say die," he went to the village and worked. He dug banana fields until he had earned a good deal towards his tuition. Then he wrote home. His father and his elder brother each sent a contribution, and all put together Jacobo was able to go to school for a whole year.

Will Jacobo ever reach the Priesthood? Please God he will. His hopes have never waned. He is still God's little beggar and he begs your prayers too that he may one day be a priest according to God's own heart.



# In the Mail Bag

From ILLINOIS

Dear Sisters:

The "widow's mite" comes to you from our Sacred Heart Colored Mission. That mission field is only thirteen miles from our Academy, where I am employed as a teacher on school days. On Saturdays and Sundays, I become a missionary to our poor colored folks at home.

Please include our work in your good prayers and pray also for our Mission boys as well as our Soldier brothers, relatives and friends on all fronts—they are too numerous to name.

Sr. M. A.

\* \* \* \*

Dear Sisters:

We just want to drop you a little note to tell you just why and how you were adopted by us.

First of all each room in the Academy of Our Lady adopts a missionary and we pray for them, and we have Mission parties in which each girl sacrifices her own money for the entire week and gladly contributes it for the Missions. Another reason was the inspiring talk two of your sisters gave us. We enjoyed it immensely.

We're all praying that more and more people of Africa will be converted soon. Keep up the splendid work you are doing and in the future we shall continue to pray for you. Until later we remain,

Sincerely yours,

(the then) Freshmen VI.  
Academy of Our Lady.

\* \* \* \*

From NEW YORK

Dear Sisters:

The sixth and seventh classes of K... are sending your missions \$5, in the hope that you will be able to use it in your Christmas work. They are also sending you a "Christmas box" filled with things for your own use.

Wishing you a very Happy Christmas, I remain,

Your loving child,

Denise Lavedan.

Secretary of the Duchesne Mission Unit.

\* \* \* \*

My Dear Sisters: "Somewhere in France"

"The Messenger" reached me yesterday, and reminds me that once again Christmas is approaching. I am enclosing a cheque as my contribution at this time, and wish each and every one a Very Merry Christmas and continued success in your mission.

Yours sincerely,

II Lt. Teresa E. B....

\* \* \* \*

"T.P.O., San Francisco, CALIF."

Dear Sisters:

It is my desire to give five dollars to some charitable cause. Enclose a check, which I will appreciate your using for charity.

I happened to see your organization mentioned in a copy of "Novena Notes."

Best wishes for success in your good work.

Very truly yours, Lt. Richard A....

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

### RANSOMED PAGAN BABIES

Mrs. R. Howard.

Our Lady of Sorrows School, So. Orange, N. J.

Mary Fahey.

Sacred Heart School, Worcester, Mass.

Miss M. Hillenbrand.

Mrs. N. Palace.

St. Francis Xavier School, Waterbury, Mass.

Mrs. R. Pung.

Mrs. C. Fantino.

St. Cecilia High School, Kearny, N. J.

St. Elizabeth School, Linden, N. J.

SS Cyril and Methodius School, Joliet, Ill.

Patricia Cove, Worcester, Mass.

### TO CLOTHE A CHILD FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Miss M. E. Matson.

St. Scholastic Academy, Chicago.

Miss M. Jarvis.

M. M. MacAleer.

### TO KEEP A SANCTUARY LAMP BURNING

For one year: Miss M. Hillenbrand.

For a month: Mrs. R. Dippold.

Mr. P. Ryznar.

### TO SUPPORT THE LEPERS

Miss M. E. Matson.

Miss M. Hillenbrand.

Mrs. C. McClellan.

Mrs. J. Donnelly.

Mrs. M. Broderick.

Mrs. G. B. Yale.

### PROVIDED BREAD FOR THE ORPHANS

Miss M. M. Santori.

Miss M. E. Matson.

## OBITUARY

Reverend Lepers, C. Goes, P. Equin, Brother Bitteau, all members of the Society of the White Fathers.

Sister M. Francis, W.S., Holland.

Sister Agnes-Marie, W.S., Carthage, Tunisia.

Sister M. Philomena, Presentation Sisters, Newfoundland.

Sisters M. Vida, Agnes Frances, Aidan Leonora, Sisters of St. Joseph.

Mrs. Blanche, Jersey City, N. J., Guild Member.

Mr. M. O'Keefe, Highland Park, N. J.

Mr. E. O'Hara.

Mr. J. Selfrid.

**THE WHITE SISTERS ARE IN AMERICA—  
AND THEY ARE HERE FOR ONE PURPOSE—  
TO RECRUIT AMERICAN GIRLS  
FOR THE  
AFRICAN MISSIONS OF THE WHITE SISTERS.**

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They have a job ready for every girl who would offer herself to them. They come to America and they call to the American girl now more than ever. They see the American nurses and the Women's Auxiliary Corps in North Africa, they witness the job they are doing.

Because of this, they are sure that the American girls can do the work assigned to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (the White Sisters). For this reason they have a postulate in the Diocese of Trenton, at Middlesex Avenue, Metuchen, New Jersey.

Any young girl between eighteen and thirty-three who is interested may write, for further information, to:

Reverend Mother Superior  
White Sisters Convent  
Metuchen, New Jersey.

**WILL**

Our Legal Title Is

**THE MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA  
METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY**

Don't forget the missions in your WILL! You will never regret it, now or later. Why not include this clause?

*"I hereby bequeath to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa for use in their African Missions, the sum of ..... Dollars."*



The Bond you buy over  
here—may save a life  
over there!

★ BUY BONDS ★



Our Most Sincere THANK YOU to  
ALL

Who so generously answered the appeal in be-  
half of our poor famine stricken Africans.

God Bless You.

